

REMARKS

Claims 6 - 14 remain active in this application. Claims 2 and 15 have previously been canceled. Claims 1 and 3 - 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer above. Amendment of claim 6 as suggested by the Examiner has been requested. No other amendment to the specification or claims is currently presented and no new matter has been introduced into the application. The indication of allowability of claims 6 - 14 is noted with appreciation.

The Examiner has raised objections to claims 1 and 6 in regard to formal matters. These objections are respectfully traversed as being moot in view of the cancellation of claim 1 and the amendments adopting the Examiner's suggestions in regard to claim 6. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3 - 4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Meier in view of Flach et al. and claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Meier in view of Flach et al. and Welles, II, et al. These grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed for the reasons made of record in previous response which are hereby fully incorporated by reference herein and as being moot in view of the cancellation of claims 1 and 3 - 5, above. While Applicant does not acquiesce in these grounds of rejection which are, again, respectfully submitted to be in error and improper, all claims to which these grounds of rejection have been applied have been canceled to expedite prosecution of this application. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these grounds of rejection are respectfully requested.

It is also respectfully submitted that entry of the above-requested amendments is well-justified. 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b)(1) clearly and explicitly provides for entry of amendments canceling claims or complying with any requirement of form. The amendments to claims 6 were not earlier presented because the objections those amendments address was newly raised in the official action to which this amendment responds. Further, the amendments requested above cannot possibly raise new issues since they are confined to verbatim adoption of the Examiner's suggestions and, in any event, are not substantive. Accordingly, entry of the above-requested amendments to claim 6 is respectfully requested.

Since all rejections, objections and requirements contained in the outstanding official action have been fully answered, it is respectfully submitted that reconsideration is now in order under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.111(b). Upon reconsideration, it is also respectfully submitted that this application is in *prima facie* condition for allowance and such action is therefore respectfully requested.

If an extension of time is required for this response to be considered as being timely filed, a conditional petition is hereby made for such extension of time. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment to Attorney's Deposit Acct. No. 50-2041.

Respectfully submitted,



Marshall M. Curtis
Reg. No. 33,138

Whitham, Curtis, Christofferson & Cook, P. C.
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340
Reston, Virginia 20190
(703) 787-9400

Customer Number: 30743